

Last **Days** of Persecution

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brave companions in glory, herself placed him in the cart to be borne to the stake.

Another moving story of the Licinian persecution is that of Gordius of Caesarea, in Cappadocia. He had fled from his home to live the life of a hermit among the mountains, when suddenly an impulse came upon him to return and testify to the truth. The people were all assembled in the Circus, intent upon some public spectacle, when an uncouth figure was seen to move slowly down the marble steps and then pass out into the centre of the arena. A hush fell upon the multitude, as the hermit was recognised and dragged before the tribunal of the Governor. " *I have come,*" he said, " to shew how little *I* think of your edicts and to confess my faith in Jesus Christ, and *I* have chosen this moment, O Governor, because I know your cruelty, which surpasses that of all other men." They put him to the torture: he delighted in his pain. " The more you torture me," he said, " the greater will be my reward. There is a bargain between God and us. Each pang and torment that we suffer here will be rewarded there by increased glory and happiness."

Licinius had thus, like Maximin, made himself the champion of the old religion and the religious reactionaries. When in 323 war again broke out between himself and Constantine, it was as the professed enemy of Christianity and its God that he took the field. The war was a war of ambition on both sides, but it was also a war between the two religions. We have mentioned elsewhere the oath which Licinius took before the battle, when he vowed that if the